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Southern Environmental Enforcement Network recognizes EPA Baton Rouge Resident Office

BATON ROUGE - The Baton Rouge office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division (USEPA-CID) was recognized March 4 by the Southern Environmental Enforcement Network (SEEN) for outstanding achievement in environmental enforcement and extraordinary support of the SEEN. Geary Allen, executive director of SEEN, presented a plaque to Brett Spiers, resident agent in charge of the Baton Rouge office, acknowledging the office's excellent work.

The Baton Rouge resident office of the USEPA-CID is one of the most active and successful USEPA-CID offices in the nation, Allen said. Over the past five years, the office has been responsible for 84 defendants charged; 115 months of incarceration and 1,332 months of probation; \$20,781,550 in criminal fines; \$6,086,752 in restitution to victims; and \$4,190,080 in community service payments.

SEEN is an alliance of environmental regulatory and law enforcement agencies that provides formal training and opportunities for the sharing of information to state and local enforcement professionals. "I want to thank the Baton Rouge office of USEPA-CID on behalf of all of the 12-state member agencies," Allen said.

The USEPA-CID Baton Rouge office has supported SEEN's mission by seeking court ordered community service payments to SEEN's training program. "We are pleased to support SEEN's training program through a highly innovative approach - having violators pay to train enforcers in the methods and techniques of identifying future violators," Spiers said.

"SEEN is the only organization in the Southeast that provides training to environmental civil inspectors, criminal investigators and attorneys" said Mike Daniels, DEQ Criminal Investigative Division attorney and current vice chairman of SEEN. "Today's presentation recognized the Baton Rouge office of EPA-CID for its great support of SEEN and its mission."

"SEEN continues to be a valuable partner with DEQ-CID. The value of the free training, scholarships, and informational resources provided by SEEN and utilized by all DEQ employees cannot be over-emphasized during times when our state faces budget challenges," said Jeff Nolan, manager of DEQ-CID.

In addition to their investigative work, the office is known for its pioneering state-federal partnership which includes the housing of two state criminal investigators within the office. The state criminal investigators, one of whom is a DEQ employee, work hand-in-hand with federal agents on cases. The arrangement has been highly successful and is a model of state-federal cooperation.